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Including migrant learners in education: Voices of primary school pupils in England

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Abstract

This article considers preliminary findings from a small-scale qualitative study that is currently underway (2015—2016). The study explores how inclusion of new and recent migrant children in education is understood and enacted by primary school learners and their teachers in England, a country that has seen significant immigration from a range of countries. The paper focuses on responses from pupils and, given the scope of the M2B workshop, includes findings from among Indonesian primary school pupils who have migrated to England.

Children are often at the forefront of working out the meaning and implication of being a new arrival in a different country. As pupils in the state school system, they are in an environment that emphasises “integration” – adapting to new rules, making new friends, and possibly learning a new language. However, little research is focused on how children feel about this new environment and the extent to which they feel included within it. Therefore, this article offers the findings from research that maintains such a focus, drawing on participants’ views that emerged through the use of the creative visual methods of picturebooks and photography. The article gives an overview of key issues in migration and education that will be relevant to Indonesian migrants, including migrant children's rights and entitlements within education in England. It also illustrates theoretical development that is underway in terms of a framework that combines notions of inclusion and migration. More specifically, informed by the findings, it upholds and elaborates this framework that views inclusion as involving participation and educational access with regard to access to the curriculum and as well as to the classroom culture. It closes by sharing some emerging guidelines for inclusion of migrant children within schools.

Key words

Education, migration, creative methods, voice

Introduction: Migrant children and schooling

Migration is a universal experience as it affects everyone in one way or another (Castles and Millar, 2009). But it is migrant children are often at the forefront of working out what it means to be a new arrival in a different country. When they become pupils in the state school system in England, they enter an environment that emphasises “integration” – adapting to new rules, making new friends, and possibly learning a new language (Hanna, 2016a). Moving beyond the school walls, these children arrive into a society where it has been suggested that increased social fragmentation and polarisation has led to the failure of multiculturalism, in some regions partly characterised by communities segregated along ethno-racial, religious and class lines (Keddie, 2014). In England in particular this has have sparked renewed discussion around identity, not least regarding conceptions of ‘Britishness’, and schools have been targeted by government as sites where such unifying identities should be instilled (Burns, 2015). Much of this focus has filtered down into educational policy and curricular initiatives for ethno-racial inclusion and multicultural educational practice; at the same time, however, schools have also been compelled to develop a non-discriminatory and inclusive approach to a range of children, irrespective of their country of origin, ability, gender, culture, religion, race or ethnicity (Department for Education, 2014a). Thus, being included appears to be viewed as key to children’s educational experience and well-being, with Shucksmith et al (2006, p. 7) underlining the ‘important consequences’ that well-being has for ‘social and educational attainment at primary school age, but also later in the school career.’ It may also have implications for social integration in adult life (Myers, 1999).

The UK has a long history of immigration from across the globe. Formerly, much of this movement of people came from former British colonies, whereas more recently, populations have arrived from a wide range of countries and for a variety of reasons, not least the search for employment (Bulmer and Solomos, 2015). Most recently, however, the UK has been grappling with the “migrant crisis” within Europe, stemming from political instability and conflict in the Middle East and Central and South Asian regions (Berry, Garcia-Blanco and Moore, 2016). The concerns this has raised, not least around racist elements in UK society becoming more prominent, has made issues relating to migration and the inclusion of new

migrants into UK society even more pressing. But while the focus is often on adult (potential worker) migration and integration, less emphasis is placed on child migrants. Some studies concerned with migrant children argue that migration may have damaging consequences for young people, while others are more ambivalent, highlighting the vast range of factors that can affect children's well-being at school (Stevens and Vollebergh, 2008). Studies focusing on children's views are sparse, particularly within the educational field. This paper aims to highlight specifically children's views, founded on the belief that the recognition of children's views and identities in school can help to contribute to their sense of inclusion, belonging and, ultimately, well-being.

This article reports on such primary research, drawing on participants' responses that used creative methods such as picturebooks and photography. It begins by presenting information on the process of accessing education for migrant children in England, particularly focusing on a post-industrial city in the north of the country, where the research took place. Once this context has been established, the working theoretical framework used to approach the research will be introduced – that of inclusion-as-participation. Next, details of the research methods and participants will be offered, particularly highlighting the creative methods used among pupil-researchers. This will be followed by the findings from pupils in England, with a focus on inclusion understood as participation and access to both the curriculum and the classroom culture. The discussion that follows it will relate back to the theoretical literature, taking some tentative steps beyond it, but drawing the paper to a close with some comments, including some emerging guidelines for inclusion of migrant children within schools.

Educational access in England

Migrant learners, like all learners, have certain rights within education in England. Some of these rights are dictated by international law and applied within national law and policy. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) requires all signatories – including England as part of the UK – to adhere to a long list of rights. These include the right to free primary education, to non-discrimination and to be consulted on anything that affects them. The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) and its official interpretations also require that education be accessible to learners (Tomaševski, 2001). Being ‘accessible’ in this way means that the education system should be non-discriminatory, that is, accessible to all, and efforts must be made to include socially, culturally, geographically and economically marginalised individuals (Friboulet, Niameogo, Liechti, Dalbera & Meyer-Bisch, 2006; Right to Education Project, 2008). Governments have an obligation to ensure access to education for all children in the compulsory education age-range (Tomaševski, 2001). Tomaševski (2004) views a rights-based approach to education as being founded on the following: access to free and compulsory education; equality, *inclusion* [my emphasis] and non-discrimination; and the right to quality education, content and processes.

Thus, inclusion may be viewed as a right or entitlement, and inclusion may be understood as accessibility. It may be argued, then, that in terms of international law, an accessible education may relate to access on a number of levels: physical access to school, as well as intellectual and cultural access, particularly for less dominant groups. Indeed, my own previous research has shown the importance in multi-ethnic countries of access to school in terms of curricular content and representation of their culture in the curriculum, in addition to physical access (Hanna 2016). But what about on a national level in England? The requirements of the present day school system was enshrined in the 1944 Education Act, with the most recent admissions code updated in 2014 (DfE, 2014b). With regard to primary education, although every child is entitled to a place, it may not necessarily be at their preferred school as schools in certain areas are over-subscribed. Primary schools are bound by their local educational authority and must enrol children without discrimination regarding their background. Despite such legal requirements, Kirsten Anderson and colleagues at the Children’s Legal Centre (2008) are among those who have argued that not all children, including migrant children, are able to access education equally. In addition to enrolment requirements, individual schools must write their own broad inclusion policy and make it available.

Also relevant to migrant children and inclusion is the content of the National Curriculum (for primary schools) which was introduced in 2014 (DfE, 2013). Content includes the teaching of ‘British values’, deemed to be democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, as well as Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (DfE 2014c). Although separate from the National Curriculum, religious education must be taught, developed locally to suit the nature of the area (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2010). What is deemed to be the values-based aspects of the curriculum are frequently discussed in the media, with the teaching of British values coming under particular scrutiny, especially in light of recent concerns over terrorism (see, for example, Burns, 2015).

Thus, on the international and national legal stage, on paper at least, it is clear that educational access is a priority. In the context of England’s latest census, which that showed that almost 7.3 million people living there, including children, were born elsewhere (ONS, 2013), along with ongoing migration, it is clear that migrant inclusion is fast becoming a key concern on the policy and practice levels. But what does the term ‘inclusion’ actually mean in this context? The following section will outline a provisional, working framework for inclusion of migrant pupils.

Theoretical framework: Inclusion and migration

Within education, the notion of ‘inclusion’ finds its origins in the education of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). However, this research seeks to broaden out conceptions of inclusion to embrace the challenges faced by those with a variety of needs, and specifically migrant children.

Nutbrown and Clough (2013; see also Booth and Ainscow, 1998), among many others active in the area of SEND, point out that over the last forty years there has been a movement in terms of how children who are deemed to require additional educational input are considered. They claim that the education system has moved away from the idea of educating children separately, to integration (focus on changing the child to fit with the status quo and school expectations), and gradually, then, towards inclusion (where the focus is on changing the environment, school, and society to meet the needs of the child). In the world of migration inclusion, the journey towards inclusion, it may be suggested, has involved a move away from ‘assimilation’, where, as Castles and Miller (2009, p. 247) point out, ‘[a]ssimilation meant that immigrants were to be incorporated into society through a one-sided process of adaptation’, towards ‘some acceptance of long-term cultural difference’ (O’Reilly, 2012, p. 39)

Looking beyond SEND, UNESCO (2005, p. 13) understands inclusion as ‘a process of addressing and responding to the diversity of needs of all learners through increasing *participation* [my emphasis] in learning, cultures and communities, and reducing exclusion within and from education’. UNESCO places a particular emphasis on removing barriers to education for those deemed on those ‘at risk’. Such an understanding, and particularly their incorporation of the notion of participation, allowed the present author to see that a framework for inclusion-as-participation might have a much wider application for all children who may be considered ‘at risk’ (UNESCO, 2005, p. 15) and not just those with SEND. This framework was that which was espoused by Black Hawkins, Florian and Rouse (2007), and which focuses on access, diversity and collaboration for children with SEND. The author elaborated this framework within the context of migrant learners, informed by the findings of this research. Thus, below is presented an outline of those scholars’ basic framework; in the discussion section of this article can be found the elaborated understandings of one part of this framework, that was developed within the context of this research among migrant children: participation and access.

Black-Hawkins et al's framework is set against a certain understanding of participation that is key to the framework, and which draws on the work of a range of scholars. I mention here only those understandings that are relatable to migrant children, where participation: concerns all aspects of school life; is concerned with responses to diversity in its broadest sense; requires active and collaborative learning for all; involves pupils activating their right to 'join in'; and is based on relationships of *mutual* recognition and acceptance. In terms of contextualising the framework for participation, Arnot et al's (2014, p. 23) work on pupils with English as an Additional Language is relevant, where she views social integration as key to children's language development and educational achievement, and leans on Langenkamp's (2009) understanding of participation as involving 'full participation within school life, and builds on a sense of belonging and cohesion within school, around common values and positive and inclusive relationships with peers'.

Black-Hawkins et al's (2007) framework involves three interlinked understandings of participation: diversity, collaboration and access. As it is the 'access' part that is the focus of this article, only that section is elaborated here; however, the full research draws on all three aspects. Access involves 'being there' – joining and staying in the class, being able to access the physical class and play areas, and being able to access the curriculum. For Black-Hawkins et al, accessing the curriculum is framed in terms of whether there is intellectual access in terms of ability or types of activities. For the purposes of this research, this may be understood in terms of the cultural content of the curriculum, whether it is appropriate for migrant children and can connect with their experiences, in addition to potential language issues. But it may also be understood in terms of the broader access issues: for some children, the 'culture' of the classroom may be very different from what they have previously experienced, not least in the case of those children who have had very little opportunity to attend school in any formal sense. These are potential contextualisations for migrant children; more will be discussed later in relation to particular examples from the fieldwork in schools.

It became clear that the provisional theoretical framework would be best explored through an exploratory approach to research methods that focused on children's participation in research. It is this exploratory, creative and participatory approach that is explained below.

Methods and participants: Pupil-researchers using creative approaches

The overarching research objective was to explore how inclusion of recent migrant children is understood in primary schools in England. This qualitative project views as central the subjective understandings and experiences of individuals and groups (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). It takes as a starting point the popular ‘Mosaic’ approach (Clark and Moss, 2001) that draws on multiple methods to access the understandings of children, and treats children’s views as equal to those of adults. Furthermore, it recognises children as holding agency and their role as experts on their own lives. It takes seriously the rights-based approach that confirms that children have a right to be involved in anything that affects their lives, including research (Lundy, 2007). It also builds on work done on developing creative research methods (Kara, 2015) such as photography (Banks, 2001) and picturebooks among migrant children (Arizpe, Colomer and Martínez-Roldán, 2014), particularly the special ways in which picturebooks can help children empathise with a character and therefore enable them to connect with and subsequently articulate their own experiences (Hanna, 2016a; Kucharczyk, 2016).

The wider research project involved working with small groups of children (who we called ‘pupil-researchers’) in a number of primary schools (and countries) using still cameras, picturebooks, individual and group discussions, and non-participant observations. It also included semi-structured interviews with the pupils’ teachers (three in each school) and the analysis of key policy and curriculum documents that related to inclusion. The pupil-researchers were either second or 1.5 generation migrants (Bartley & Spoonley, 2008), with the findings presented in this article focusing on the 1.5 generation, who were not born in UK. The researcher worked twice a week over a period of 6 weeks in the school that is the focus of this article, researching alongside a group of six pupil-researchers aged 9-11 years (school Years 5 and 6). Each weekly creative session lasted 60-90 minutes. She also carried out shorter, pilot-style research in the same school with a separate group of children, before the main research began. She also observed and engaged with them throughout the school day once per week. The picturebook ‘The Arrival’ (authored by Shaun Tan), which tells the story of a man migrating to a new country, followed by his family, was used to stimulate the pupil-researchers’ memories and ideas about being new at the school. They then explored their own school experiences through taking photos of school life. Throughout, the research group were discussing school and inclusion. Following the photography, pupil-researchers designed a list

of ways that others can help them feel included. The schools were selected based on contacts made during previous research and were those that had significant numbers of migrant children. This article is based on findings from both the pilot and the main research project in a primary school in a post-industrial city in the north of England.

The data was fully transcribed and analysed thematically (see Braun and Clarke, 2006, for the general steps of analysis). The theme of inclusion as participation and access is one of a number that emerged, and is discussed below.

[Findings: Accessing the curriculum and the classroom culture](#)

Findings confirmed aspects of Black-Hawkins, Florian and Rouse's (2007) framework of participation-as-inclusion, but contextualised it with regard to migrant pupils. The aspect that will be focused on in this section is the idea that, if inclusion means participation, then participation must also mean access. What emerged from the work with primary school pupil-researchers was that not only does access mean being able to physically access the school, but also that it means being able to access the curriculum in terms of relevance, as well as accessing the classroom culture with regard to children's approach to learning and behaving. It is these non-physical aspects of access that are the focus of this section, taken in sequence, drawing on key quotations from the pupil-researchers.

[Accessing the curriculum](#)

Much has been written about the politics of the curriculum, and the view that it is heavily reflective of the ideas and values that society wishes to pass down the generations, and subsequently, the kind of people that school should be creating (see, for example, Apple 1993; Podeh, 2000). The present research showed that, for migrant pupils in a primary school in England, it was important that what they were learning in class connected with their lives and that their teachers knew about their culture and helped them. This was particularly so for the

Muslim pupils when, for example, the pupil-researchers showed they were pleased that their teacher had learned about their religion and then shared this information with the class:

Ahmed: Do you know there is some teachers are not from our countries but they teach, they found out some things about our country and they could, like, tell us

Interviewer: Do they do that?

Ahmed: yeah, when they learning like we're learning about Muslim people, me and Bilal and Sara and Wada

Indeed, their Religious Education lessons were much talked about by the group and offered children a place where they were 'the expert'

Widad: yes, because we are learning about the Muslims and I know more [than the teacher]

Interviewer: do you like that? Do you like learning about that in school?

Widad: yeah and I also like to correct Miss when she's incorrect

Interviewer: oh, you think she's incorrect sometimes?

Widad: mm hm...

Bilal: it was easy because it's our religion, but for other people it's hard

Thus, it may be surmised that focusing on subjects with which some pupils were familiar in some way enabled them to access the curriculum more easily, in addition to offering them the chance to have their self-esteem built by showing their knowledge or being called upon to share it with the class.

In addition, it is important to note that the curriculum is not limited to the classroom. The content taught through events such as school assembly, which took place in the case school every week, offered teachers an opportunity to pass on important information about school events as well as meet some of the Department for Education's goals for schools in terms of teaching pupils about school and national values. For example, there appeared to be a significant amount of time spent discussing issues such as racism and tolerance, with displays

on the walls evidenced this emphasis. Such discussions also, according to pupil's responses, included highlighting positive examples and even stereotypes of non-white public figures. For example, B remembered the following assembly:

Bilal: Miss, last term we learned about our skin and all the black people are the best, fastest people

Interviewer: is that true?

Bilal: yeah...and then the black people have the best players football and runners and everything

Interviewer: ah better than white people, you think?

Bilal: yeah

Bilal in this instance was clearly proud of this positive reference to his 'race', and highlights how positive examples of a migrant pupil's culture can build their self-esteem, in addition to educating the others in the class or school.

An issue related to the curriculum is the fact that it is sometimes delivered separately to migrant children, particularly where they are new to English; in primary classrooms in England, it is sometimes the case that the migrant children sit with a teaching assistant at the back of the class, so that the assistant can follow on from the lesson that the teacher has begun from the front of the class, helping the children to complete tasks at a level of difficulty that is deemed more appropriate for them. For some this may be viewed as standard differentiation of the class according to ability; for others, it may be viewed as exclusionary, and indeed those migrant children who had moved out of this group were keen that it be known, while those who were still part of the group showed that they would prefer to be mixed with the rest of the class at least some of the time. As one pupil said:

Interviewer: What about you, S, do you like to sit at the back or do you want to sit with the other children?

Sara: sometimes I like to front sometimes I want to the back, yeah

Added to this fact are problems associated with the reality that, in the case school, children were deemed to have a behavioural issue or delayed learning are also at this table, thus potentially increasing the potential for stigmatisation of migrant children. Indeed, pupils appeared to view this table much more as a table for ‘naughty’ children rather than predominantly for migrant children with additional language needs.

Interviewer: ... How does the teacher decide who sits where?

Bilal: she just thinks about who is good so she's gonna put the naughty people over there so they can be good...if she put, like, all the naughty people in the same place there will be, like, big arguing and things so she's trying to-

Thus being placed with those with behavioural issues may have a negative effect on migrant children, giving them the impression that they have been placed there due to a need to be separate or ostracised.

However, there were others who did not consistently appear interested in learning about their own culture, or even being singled out as being ‘other’ – one pupil, who is of central African origin, although he highlighted which country he was from at one point, was also adamant that he was not from Africa and when the researcher played some music from South Africa, he seemed keen to distance himself from it as ‘African music’ and was also the only one who did not want to appear in any materials relating to the research. This was despite the fact that this pupil showed great confidence in the group in other ways, especially through making jokes and making others laugh. Of course, there is a vast array of possible explanations for the pupil’s behaviour, but it does raise the point that, if culturally appropriate curricula are to be designed, then teachers cannot assume that pupils will automatically relate to it or even wish to engage with it – that participation, crucially, has to be a choice. Indeed, some children appeared to have very little formal knowledge about their parents’ home backgrounds, especially if they were second generation migrants and so had been born in the UK or moved to the UK at a very young, pre-school age.

Connected to curricular access, the findings highlighted the influential role of the classroom culture and how it may help or hinder children in becoming more included. Classroom culture here refers to how the class works in terms of expectations of behaviour and interaction between pupils themselves as well as between pupils and teachers.

Challenges may arise when it comes, therefore to offering a fully inclusive environment for children whose experience of school differs sharply from that which they are faced with in England. For example, one of the pupil-researchers who came from the Middle East suggested that it would be better for migrant children if the classroom was 'less noisy', as her experience of school in her home country was that of a quieter and more strictly controlled classroom. In this case, then the noise level was a hindrance for her. This issue arose during a discussion between her, a long-term migrant child and the interviewer about the differences and similarities between her school in her home country and her new school (the case school):

Interviewer: and the children, are they the same or different?

Sara: different... quietly only

Interviewer: quiet only in Oman, really?

Sara: yeah...

Widad: the boys are so noisy but the girls are quiet, but in the line all the girls talk

Sara: waaa aaaaah aaaaah [doing an impression of the noisy pupils]

Interviewer: Do you like it noisy or quiet?

Sara: No, I like it quietly...no shouting out

Interviewer: teachers?

Sara: teachers, yeah, too noisy

Now, such discussions are not evidence that the approach to the classroom in England is negative and should be entirely change; but it does highlight how it is important for educators and other pupils themselves to aware how such a different environment may impact on a new,

migrant pupil, and take account of it, making adjustments where deemed necessary, after careful observation and reflection.

One way in which it was shown that access to the classroom culture was valued by both teachers and pupils was through the encouragement of established pupils to help the new pupils to settle in. Pupil-researchers found it easy to recall ways in which they have or could help other new migrant children to feel included at school, and it was clear that those who had most recently migrated were able to relate most readily to the concept, offering many examples:

Bilal: you can, like, show them everywhere in the school, and show them what time you are eating food and-

Interviewer: what about you, A, what do you think? What can we do to help children feel included? Remember when you were new, what did people do to help you?

Ahmed: ... I remember they helped me, when the first time I came, I thought everyone was English but I founded U...and he spoked Arabic and we were the best friends

Interviewer: did you like that?

Ahmed: yeah. When I learned English, then we were not friends. Then, in year 4 we were a little bit friends, then now, we are friends back [again].

Thus, children were collaborating, in a sense, in making sure that new migrant children felt included within the classroom. Such discussions also highlight how those who shared a home language with the new pupils often made friends with them, either by choice or by request from their teacher, and this approach seemed to be important and valued by the children, given that many continued these friendships even after they had been at the school for some time. However, where there was no common language, it was not necessarily seen as a barrier to making friends with the new pupils. For example, the pupil-researchers discussed a pupil who joined the school during the research, and how they connected with him using gestures and humour:

Bilal: me and Ahmed and other people were playing with him and we do action to, like, understand all this...he's funny as well. Last time when Widad said, 'Can I play with you?', he said, 'No', and Am said, 'If you let him he gonna be on', and I said, 'Yeah, yeah, yeah, go' and

then everybody laughing, he just don't want to be on' [laughs] [this may have been referring to being 'on' during a chasing game].

Thus, pupils may be better able than teachers to build relationships with migrant pupils, focusing on commonalities that teachers may overlook. Thus, it may be surmised that treating pupils as both 'experts' and 'collaborators' allows the culture of the classroom to be inclusive, offering a unique learning opportunity for all class members.

Discussion: Participation, inclusion and migration

The findings among primary school pupils in relation to inclusion allowed the 'access' aspect of Black-Hawkins et al's (2007) framework for participation to be elaborated upon within the context of children who have migrated to England. As mentioned earlier, these scholars understood 'access' as involving physical access to the space, and intellectually access to the curriculum. Findings among pupil-researchers showed that 'access' may be understood in terms of the curriculum: its cultural content and whether it is appropriate for migrant children and can connect with their experiences, in addition to potential language issues. But findings also showed that access may be understood much more broadly, in terms of access to the classroom culture, where for some children, the 'culture' of the classroom was very different from what they had previously experienced and so was very unfamiliar and sometimes bewildering to them.

The findings above may be considered within a number of bodies of literature. In addition to that on inclusive education, curriculum studies allows us to view what the pupil-researchers shared in a particular way. One wing of this sub-discipline tends to focus on the politics and power of the curriculum. (Apple, 1993) Some argue that the curriculum reflects power structures in society, and therefore a tool in the socialisation of children, ensuring that certain understandings about how society should be ordered are passed on to the next generation. (Podeh, 2000) Furthermore, and despite clear ethnic diversity, it could be argued that western European countries have viewed themselves as fundamentally white and middle class, and that this is reflected in the curriculum and approach to education (Kamali, 2000). This is relevant here when considering the inclusiveness of the curriculum for migrant children, those who are often considered under-privileged on a number of levels: age, socio-economic background,

access to social capital, former school experience, access to the language of instruction, as well as access to the local culture and knowledge system. Thus, migrant children may be at a potential disadvantage when being initiated into a body of knowledge which bears little resemblance or relevance to their previous knowledge or home culture. It may therefore be argued that, if the curriculum is to be inclusive of migrant children, then it is crucial that their identities are valued and potentially discussed in the curriculum. As Shepherd Johnson (2003) has underlined, a non-discriminatory education is one that should be ‘integrally responsive to all’ (p. 18) and so teachers need to be aware of ‘different cultural ways of knowing and behaving and attempt to allow for different orientations on the part of classroom learners’ (p. 24). My previous research in conflict-affected societies (Hanna, 2016b) highlighted the particular importance for under-privileged groups of being able to “find themselves in the story” of what they are learning in school. It may be argued that this will help ensure their confidence in who they are and their cultural background, potentially promoting engagement with school and, more broadly, a stronger level of self-esteem and well-being, something which is of particular concern among migrant children (Rumbaut, 1994). As Shucksmith et al (2006, p. 7) have stated, ‘Establishing mental well-being has important consequences for social and educational attainment at primary school age, but also later in the school career.’

However, the discussions with pupil-researchers also revealed that this does not always or only imply direct reference to material within the curriculum on pupils’ home cultures, or, indeed, what may be assumed to be their cultures. It may be that being pointed out as ‘the migrant’ in the class can actually be inhibiting and work against the kind of participation and access of pupils to which their teachers may aspire. To be optimal and truly emancipatory, participation must be a choice made by the learner, rather than one imposed on them. Indeed, this is also a tenet of the UNCRC, whose formal interpretations reveal that, when it comes to making decisions of issues that affect them, children and young people not only have the right to be involved, but also the right to not be involved (Lundy, 2007). This implies, then, a highly sensitive approach to ensuring that the curriculum is culturally responsive (see, for example, Novick, 1996) but only in ways that are acceptable to the learners.

As the findings also implied, the classroom culture must also not be underestimated in terms of the influence it can have on learners and how it can promote participation. As with the curriculum, the culture and physical environment of the classroom transmits messages, whether

explicit or implicit, to pupils about what is valued by the school – how pupils should behave, the language they should use, and acceptable religions, cultures and values; this is often described as part of the ‘hidden curriculum’ (Jackson, 1968). As soon as a migrant child (and their families) enters the school, even the reception areas of the wider school are transmitting messages about expectations – to use the language of this article, about who can be included and who cannot. The additional challenges for migrant children and their families will lie in knowing and being able to act where such expectations can be challenged. The literature on school ethos has something to offer such considerations, with Donnelly (2000) arguing that a school’s ethos can be shaped by all the staff, and this research would imply that even pupils themselves have agency in this way, helping to shape the educational experience of a new migrant learner. In this way, then, we can bring in another aspect of Black-Hawkins et al’s framework – that of participation as involving collaboration. Understanding participation as collaboration involves, in Black-Hawkins’ view, ‘learning together’, in terms of children with other children, staff with other staff, and staff with those beyond the class. I would also suggest that the findings of the present research imply that this should be extended to include children and staff learning together, recognising the huge potential not only for children to learn from their teachers, but also for teachers to learn from migrant children, given the children’s wealth of knowledge, not least in relation to the migrant experience. In this case, and understood from a children’s rights-based perspective on research methods, the child is the ‘expert’ on their own lives, and have an insight into the ‘new’ migrant pupil that settled adults may not have. Culturally responsive schools highly value diversity and particularly children’s experiences as a resource (Novick, 1996). Thus, here, the teacher takes the back seat. And not only can this improve the experience of that particular child, but it means that such a child can help the teacher to help other children who join the school – like the examples that the pupil-researchers gave above.

Going beyond the specific issues of access to the curriculum and classroom culture, and returning to the theme of inclusion-as-participation, I propose that the overarching challenge and way forward is to enable learners to participate in influencing what goes in the classroom. One proposed way of doing this is through school councils, and much has been written in this regard. The advantages of school councils in terms of giving learners a voice are, of course, clear, and to be supported, although their effectiveness may vary (Alderson, 2000). A less formal but potentially more effective way of ensuring pupil inclusion in terms of curriculum and classroom culture is to instil the simple idea (and the resources in terms of time) of asking

the children what they think and what they need. Children struggle with the idea that they are free to make suggestions to adults. In the present research, it was found that when the pupil-researchers tried to come up with a list of advice for teachers, it turned into a list of rules for the learner to keep. It emerged that some things teachers did to be helpful, like getting the learner to introduce themselves on the first day, were the opposite of what the children wanted – to be welcomed quietly while sitting with a classmate. Such an approach applies as much to researchers and to educators. Part of the process of doing research that involves children as participants includes building their capacity so that they can see themselves as individuals who have something important to say. Simply explaining that “We, as adults, know some things about school, but you also know many things that I don’t know because you go to this school” can empower them. Using creative methods, such as were employed in this research, revealed the enormous benefits to engaging with and enabling migrant learners in particular as they don’t necessarily demand great proficiency or confidence in using the school’s language. Finding time to do something outside of the normal routine may pay great dividends in learners’ confidence and mental well-being. Thus, in this way, all actors in the school may be viewed as ‘collaborators’.

Summary

This article considered findings from a small qualitative study that used creative visual methods to explore the inclusion of new and recent migrant children in education. It focused on pupils’ views in a primary school in the north of England. It gave an overview of key issues in migration and education, including migrant children’s rights and entitlements within education in England. Using a theoretical framework that combined notions of inclusion and migration, it explored the theme of participation-as-access, where access was shown to encompass both access to the curriculum and access to the classroom culture. Attaining such access was viewed as key to aiding the development of well-being and feelings of inclusion among migrant children.

Relating back to the M2B workshop and the relevance of these findings for scholarship on Indonesia, given the high proportion of Muslims among Indonesian migrants, but also bearing in mind the religious diversity (Pearson, 2014), it will be essential that educators are aware of such diversity and potential sensitivities when working with Indonesian pupils. Some studies

have shown Indonesian teachers' positive attitudes towards inclusive education (Kurniawati, Minnaert, Mangunsong & Ahmed, 2012), however, this is mostly in relation to special educational needs and disabilities rather than migrant inclusion. Although there are fewer than 9000 Indonesians resident in UK (ONS, 2013), it is impingent on the education system to value each cultural background, reflecting it in both in the content of what is taught, and also in the way the class is conducted and culture that is encouraged, especially regarding participation.

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